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➤ CONTRIBUTED ✧ NOTES. ✧ ➤

א"פ Verbs: First Person, Sing., Impf. Qal.—Davidson in his explanation of this form says that the **א** of the *preformative* is dropped.¹ This is surely incorrect and to show how plainly he is in error, we suggest the following considerations:

1. That which causes these verbs to take on their leading peculiarity is the weakness of **א** as a consonant, and its tendency to quiesce in a preceding vowel-sound. The weakness of **א** when it is the first radical may be quite fully illustrated.

a. In a verb *prim. rad.* **א**, which is not constantly of this class, but whose **א** at times retains its consonantal character. **אחז**, in the impf. Qāl, is sometimes **יאחז**, oftener, however, **יאחז**; in which latter form the **א** quiesces in the preceding **ו**. To this might be added **אתה**, which shows in one place **תאתה**.²

b. There are not a few instances in which a first radical **א** has been dropped from the written form of the impf. Qāl, 2nd and 3rd persons. The verbs fully **א"פ** furnish the following: **תמרו**,³ **מרוך**,⁴ from **אמר**; **תבא**⁵ (for **תבה**) from **אבה**; **תתפרו**⁶ from **אפה**. Other verbs give us **תספ**⁷ from **אסף**; **תזלי**⁹ from **אזל**, **אתה** and **יתחז**,¹⁰ and **יתחז**¹¹ from **אחז**.

c. The derived conjugations show at least two instances in verbs **א"פ**, in which the radical **א** has ceased to be written. **הכיל** for **האכיל**¹² and, **אוכיל**.¹³ According to Gesenius we might here add **יכלו**¹⁴; but this Fuerst denies. Of verbs not regularly **א"פ**, but having **א** as the first radical, we have a number of instances in which the **א** has been elided in the derived conjugations.¹⁵

These instances suffice to prove the weakness of **א** as a first radical after a preformative. **א** preformative shows no such weakness; indeed its very character and office as preformative give it firmness. Davidson's explanation is against the characteristic firmness of preformatives and the characteristic weakness of **א** as a first radical preceded by a preformative.

2. If his explanation were the true one we should experience not a little difficulty in accounting for the vocalization of the remaining **א**. We can hardly say that the vowel preceding it, that of the preformative, has been given it; for this would seem to be without analogy.

3. The testimony of the cognate languages is in favor of our view, that the radical **א** has been elided. Not to mention the Chaldee, it is notably true that the Samaritan verbs of the corresponding class *very frequently* reject this consonant.¹⁶ The Syriac, as in **أش**, gives a form which is to be similarly explained.¹⁷ In Arabic, for a syllable whose typical form is orthographically analogous to that of the syllable under discussion, there is found, in old MSS., an intermediate orthography which shows quite plainly how the contracted form was developed. Thus conj. IV. of **أش** to surpass; for **أش** there is to be seen **أش** (in old MSS.) but regularly **أش**.¹⁸

¹ Heb. Gram. 5th ed., § 35, 1, Rem. d. ² Mic. iv., 8. ³ 2 Sam. xix., 14. ⁴ Ps. cxxxix., 20. ⁵ Prov. i., 10. ⁶ 1 Sam. xxviii., 24. ⁷ 2 Sam. vi., 1. ⁸ Ps. civ., 29. ⁹ Jer. ii., 36. ¹⁰ 2 Sam. xx., 9. ¹¹ Deut. xxxiii., 21. ¹² Ezek. xxi., 23. ¹³ Hos. xi., 4. ¹⁴ Ezek. xlii., 5. ¹⁵ See Kautzsch's Ges. Gram. (Mitchell) § 68, 2, Rem. 1, 2. ¹⁶ Petermann, Porta Ling. Orient., Tom. III., p. 37. ¹⁷ Noeldeke, Kurzgefasste Syr. ische Gram. § 33. ¹⁸ Wright, Arabic Gram. 2d ed. Vol. I., § 135.

In view of the above considerations, there is surely no sufficient reason for assuming that the preformative **נ** is dropped in the 1st pers., sing., impf., Qāl of the **נ"ב** verbs. On the contrary, we should hold with most authorities,¹ that the radical **נ** is elided.

The fuller explanation of this form requires more than the above. The first person is to be carefully distinguished from the second and third; for the steps in its development are not the same as those in the forms of the other persons. Quite another law obtains here, that of the dissimilation of the initial and final sounds of the syllable.² By reason of this the **נ** as the closing sound was dropped, and the preformative, being in an open syllable, was lengthened to **â**, and this latter obscured to **ô**. These changes must have taken place very early,—anterior, it would seem, to the development of the Sh'vâ mobile³ and of the tendency to the deflection of **â** to **ë** under **נ**, both of which characterize the Hebrew and Aramaic branches. Indeed it is probable that in this form of the verbs **נ"ב**, the radical **נ** was never heard in the Hebrew and, consequently, was not written.

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➤EDITORIAL NOTES.◀

Professor Strack's article on "Books for the study of the Neo-Hebraic Language" comes in quite opportunely. Many requests have been received by the American editor for just such information. These requests betoken an interest in this department of Hebrew study. Attention is invited to the care with which the edition, the number of pages, and the character of each book are given. May not American scholars learn much from the painstaking accuracy in matters of detail, which characterizes German scholars? For the translation of Dr. Strack's MS. we are indebted to Rev. O. O. Fletcher, Ottawa, Ill.

The study of alphabets is a distinct department of study, and one full of interest and importance. Not many Americans have gone into it very deeply. Among others may be mentioned the names of Dr. W. H. Ward, editor of *The Independent*, and Dr. J. P. Peters, of New York. Prof. Clarke, the author of the article on this subject in the present issue, has made it a life-long study. Only a few are in a position to criticize his results. Certainly all will enjoy this most readable article. The tables which accompany it have been prepared at great expense. This article, together with one published in *The Old Testament Student*, Vol. II., No. 10, will be reprinted in pamphlet form.

The article of Dr. Felsenthal on "Intermediate Syllables," is possibly more interesting and valuable for the information which it contains on Textual Criticism, than for what is said on the subject proper. After the careful handling of the theme here given, one must recognize that there is, to a great extent, lack of uniformity in the occurrence of such syllables. But with the following words from

¹See, for instance, Bickell's *Outlines of Hebrew Gram.* (Curtiss) §§ 36, 124; and Gesenius' *Gram.* 22d ed., and Strack, *Hebraeische Gram.* (Petermann series) *in loc.* ²For an ingenious application of this law to another and quite difficult question in Hebrew, see *OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT*, Vol. II., p. 25. ³Against this view, see Bickell's *Outlines of Hebrew Gram.* (Curtiss) § 36.